
The War and Missions

THE prudent policy for an army hard pressed is to shorten its lines. It may be assumed that the Church is hard pressed, both in men and in material; its wisdom, therefore, would appear to lie in a bold shortening of the lines, and that must mean a concentration upon the mission which waits at its door—its “far-flung battle-line” must be surrendered, and the Church must call upon its sons to defend its cause, threatened by skepticism or indifference at home. So the argument runs.

But the Church with one voice has rejected this logic in obedience to a logic of its own—the logic of spiritual experience. The ablest minds in the Church will not hear of a shortened line; and at no time have there been so many powerful minds concerned with the foreign missionary enterprise as there are today. The unpardonable sin for a modern man is to despair of the human family, or to demand a safety for himself or his people which is not

offered to all. We are not saved, it has been well said, except in a saved race.

The Church, believing as it must do that in its gospel there is a sure spiritual foundation for mankind, cannot limit its vision or its service. Nor can it do its work piecemeal; it cannot finish its task in Europe and afterwards begin in Asia. "Throughout Asia there is in process a complete transformation of social institutions, habits, standards, and beliefs. The movement is unceasing; it will as little wait on our convenience as the tides of the sea." The Church, indeed, so far from thinking that the missionary enterprise can be delayed, is stricken by remorse to know that it is late, almost too late, with the offer of a faith to which all the spiritual strivings of the East have moved. "If haply they might feel after Him, and find Him."

And why should the war delay this mission? There is a sense of humiliation, it is true, in the Church; there is a subdued tone in its voice, but there is no shame in the thought of the faith itself. The war is not the breakdown of Christianity. Though the thought of it must awake penitence in all the churches throughout Europe, the war

can never be laid to the charge of the faith. "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult, and not tried." . . .

In the early days of Protestant missions, with an audacity and a passion beyond all praise, the missionaries sought to win individual believers for the faith. Afterwards the Church was able to dream of a Church arising in the East and in the South, and the dream in a measure has come true. It is still the passionate faith of the Church that individual souls shall be won and churches of the new-born shall be formed. But there has come to the seers a vision of nations accepting as a basis of their life the spiritual values of the gospel. They read the missionary enterprise in terms of the statesmanship which alone can be tolerated in the coming age—the statesmanship which thinks internationally and takes into its range the whole world. The vision glows before the Church of the day when nations shall come to the Light, and kings to the brightness of His appearing.

— A correspondent in *The London Times*.

WHAT THE AMERICAN BOARD HAS LEARNED FROM WAR

The American Board has been engaged in missionary work in foreign lands since 1812. During this period, there has been no year without some kind of a war, revolution, massacre, or social upheaval affecting our work. Except for the magnitude and complexity of the present struggle, it is no new situation we face today. The War of 1812, during which our India work was inaugurated; the China Wars of 1840, 1857, and 1894; the Crimean War of 1853; the Civil War in America; the Boxer Uprising in 1900; and the Turkish massacres of 1876, 1895, and 1908, produced problems not unlike those which confront us at this time.

The American Board has had a history, and we would be foolish indeed if we did not profit by the experience which this history has brought us. Two great lessons emerge.

First. Uniformly there has been marked progress in the work following the periods of war or social disturbance. Not infrequently there has been advance in the very midst of war, as now, in certain centers of the Turkish Empire, the Moslems are coming to our schools and inquiring as to Christian truth in an unprecedented way.

Second. In war times the Christian people of America have stood by this work with steady loyalty and sacrificial devotion. More than once, by special gifts, they have made it possible to order an advance. During the Civil War the Board's treasury was so increased that three new stations were opened in China: Peking, Kalgan, and Tientsin. American Christianity rang true in those days. We believe it will be so today.

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